

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03

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O P 191344Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8776

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVEPRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4063

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 18, 1500 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4039 (DTG 181328Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE SECURITY SITUATION BEIRUT REMAINS CALM, BUT TENSE. A SUDANESE SOLDIER WAS KILLED BY SNIPER FIRE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS LEBANESE ARMY AND POLICE TOOK UP POSITIONS IN
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BEIRUT PORT BUT AN EMBASSY CAR WAS TURNED BACK BY PHALANGE MILITIAMEN. DEFENSE MINISTER BUTROS DISCUSSED CONSCRIPTION AND MOVEMENT OF THE ARMY THE SOUTH LEBANON WITH ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY, LEBANESE FRONT SECRETARY GENERAL ISSUED A STATEMENT IMPLICITLY CRITICIZING SARKIS' 15 JULY SPEECH. PIERRE GEMAYEL ACCUSED THE US AND THE USSR OF HAMPERING THE EFFORTS OF THE PRESIDENT.

2. SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS CALM BUT TENSE. BEIRUT REMAINS CALM, WITH ONLY ISOLATED SNIPER FIRE IN SOME SECTIONS OF EAST BEIRUT, MAINLY IN THE AYN AR-RUMMANEH-SHIAH AREA. WHILE ACTIVITY IN WEST BEIRUT HAS RETURNED TO A CLOSE TO NORMAL PACE WITH ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE SHOPS REMAINING CLOSED, IN EAST BEIRUT THE MAJORITY OF THE SHOPS HAVE STILL NOT OPENED. ON THE MORNING OF 19 JULY, HOWEVER, TWO BOMB EXPLOSIONS OCCURRED IN THE HAMRA AREA OF WEST BEIRUT, ONE OF WHICH SLIGHTLY DAMAGED THE OFFICES OF THE AN NAHAR NEWSPAPER.

3. SNIPING CONTINUES IN EAST BEIRUT. THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE ANNOUNCED ON 18 JULY THAT SNIPER FIRE HAD KILLED A SUDANESE SOLDIER IN EAST BEIRUT. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS COUPLED WITH A WARNING THAT THE ADF WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE "MILITARY ACTION" IF THE SNIPING DID NOT CEASE. THE COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT THE ADF, OBEYING ORDERS NOT TO REACT TO PROVOCATION, DID NOT RETURN FIRE.

4. ARMY DEPLOYED AT BEIRUT PORT.

A. ACCORDING TO IKE, LEBANESE ARMY AND POLICE WERE DEPLOYED IN THE BEIRUT PORT ON THE AFTERNOON OF 18 JULY. SOME 100 TROOPS WERE STATIONED INSIDE THE PORT NEAR THE GRAIN SILOS, REINFORCING LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN STATIONED ALONG THE APPROACHES TO THE PORT. THE DEPLOYMENT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PART OF NEW SECURITY MEASURES WHICH WILL "RESERVE SECURITY DUTIES WHICH INVOLVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH CITIZENS FOR THE LEBANESE POLICE FORCE AND ARMY," THE PHALANGE RADIO STATION VOICE OF LEBANON REPORTED. LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS, MEANWHILE, STATED THAT THE ADF WOULD REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT.

B. DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF LEBANESE TROOPS AND POLICE INTO THE PORT AREA, AN EMBASSY CAR ON 18 JULY WAS TURNED BACK FROM THE PORT BY ARMED PHALANGIST MILITIAMEN.

5. DISCUSSION OF DEPLOYMENT OF THE ARMY SOUTH. ON 18 JULY FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTER FUAD BUTROS DISCUSSED THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE ARMY TO SOUTH LEBANON WITH A MILITARY TEAM HEADED BY ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL VICTOR KHOURY. CONSCRIPTION AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE ARMED FORCES WERE ALSO DISCUSSED. ON 19 JULY, HOWEVER, GENERAL KHOURY TOLD DATT THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY IMMEDIATE STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT CONSCRIPTION OR TO MOVE TROOPS TO THE SOUTH.

6. LEBANESE FRONT SECRETARY GENERAL'S STATEMENT. THE LEBANESE FRONT DID NOT HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON 18 JULY, BUT EDWARD

HNAIN, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FRONT, ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED THE SPEECH OF PRESIDENT SARKIS ON 15 JULY. HNAIN'S STATEMENT TOOK THE FORM OF 16 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPEECH, AMONG WHICH WERE:

A. THE PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION WAS FEARED BECAUSE IT WAS A LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN. CAN IT BE THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE RESIGNATION WILL ENTAIL MORE HORRIBLE CONSEQUENCES THAN THAT UNKNOWN?

B. THE SPEECH, FROM BEGINNING TO END, DEALS WITH THE STATE, BUT WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT - THE STATE OR THE PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING PERSECUTED?

7. GEMAYEL STATEMENT. PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL ON 18
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JULY ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION OF "HAMPERING" THE EFFORTS OF LEBANESE PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS. GEMAYEL, SPEAKING AFTER A MEETING WITH SARKIS, SAID THAT THE US AND THE USSR HAD THROWN "MONKEY WRENCHES INTO THE WHEELS" OF THE REGIME AND THAT THIS HAD CONTRIBUTED TO PRESIDENT SARKIS' DECISION TO RESIGN.
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